

P R E S S R E L E A S E
JUNE 15, 1993

The events of the past weekend (the targeting of Gary Schippers house by Anti-Racist Action and the violent and cowardly attack upon by anti-racists by racists armed with clubs and lead pipes) and events in this city and elsewhere particularly over the last six months reveal a climate of violence and terror fostered by the far right. Although it is easy to criticize Anti-Racist Action for the Friday night action at Schippers and simplistic to portray them as a coalition of "lesbians, gays, Trotskyites, Anarchists, and the extreme left" this approach fails to take into account several factors.

i. It is the Heritage Front, the Church of the Creator and other racist groups that have carried on a violent campaign of intimidation in the last several months -- all the while proclaiming their virtue. The harassment and assaults upon anti-racist workers, stalking and death threats, the firebombing of a group home for young women, assault of staff members at that same facility, the beatings of anti-racists in Ottawa by skinheads two weekends ago, the beating (resulting in paralysis) of a South East Asian man last weekend by a Heritage Front skinhead, the kidnapping and torture of a Church of the Creator member by other members and subsequent weapon seizures, and finally the attack upon anti-racists this weekend led by Wolfgang Droege with a lead pipe. Anti-racists are responding to a wave of violence created by racists. While the merits or demerits of property destruction can be debated it is far from the deadly and physical violence of the Front.

ii. It is easy to dismiss Anti-racist Action as extremists and leftists but they are young people who have organized themselves as young people against racism. It is demeaning and patronizing to assume that young people need some sort of a "Svengali" figure to organize themselves.

iii. Anti-racists involved in actions like Friday nights mask themselves and often refuse to identify themselves not for sinister motives but for self-protection. It is anti-racists who have borne the brunt of racist violence recently and people need to protect themselves from retaliation from racists. It was Wolfgang Droege Friday night who boasted that he knew the addresses of 74 Anti-Racist Action people -- to what purpose we ask?

It is unfortunate that the events of the past weekend occurred. What is more unfortunate is that the Heritage Front, the Church of the Creator and other racists feel there is enough interest in them here in Toronto that they continue to spread their hatred and bigotry. If we are to avoid a repeat of the weekends events we must see community groups, law enforcement, and government work together to shut down them down. To not seize the opportunity we have now is only to invite further violence.

Rodney Bobiwash.....964-9087